



THE
CONNOISSEUR.

By Mr. T O W N,
CRITIC and CENSOR-GENERAL.


NUMBER CVIII.

THURSDAY, February 19, 1756.

— — — *Veniet manus, auxilio quæ*

Sit mihi. — — —

H O R.

Y correspondents, whose letters are not of sufficient length to make up a whole Paper, must be contented to wait 'till I can find convenient room to introduce them. I shall for the present fling together the two following, from a number now lying before me, though their subjects have no connection with each other.

Mr. T O W N !

Y O U must know, Sir, in my younger days I was very susceptible of the passion of love : my heart was always fluttering, jumping, and skipping, when a female object was in view : and being a pretty good master of that

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kind

kind of romantic nonsense, with which the fair are too often captivated; being fond of dancing, frisking, capering, and fidgeting to all public places; I gained the affections of many, but could settle to none: and my heart constantly returned to its owner with the wound healed.

IN this manner I lived till I grew past forty; and thinking such kind of life not so agreeable, but rather fatiguing, I came to a resolution to marry, and settle quietly in the world the remainder of my days. You may guess from my general acquaintance, I could not be a great while before I had an opportunity offered of meeting something suitable to my inclinations: accordingly I fixed my mind on a widow lady about ten years younger than myself; to whom I made known my intentions as soon as I could. I was received in such a manner as all happy lovers would wish to be: and at last got her promise for the completion: but when I pressed the day, was told it could not be so soon as I desired; for to surrender on so short a courtship, the world might impute as an indecorum in her character.

I MUST tell you, I soon found (like *Malvolio* in the play) that she had a great passion for white silk stockings; and you may be sure I always dressed my legs in that colour: but as ill luck would have it, some little time since, having stayed with her pretty late, and not being able to get either coach or chair, I was forced to trudge home in the rain, my cursed white stockings were wet from top to bottom; the next morning the rheumatism took possession of one of my knees, which not only caused an hobble in my gait, but obliged me to cloath my legs with thick ribb'd worsted for the sake of warmth.

THUS

THUS hobbling and cloathed, I went to visit my charmer, who as I entered the room was sitting in her chair more grave than usual; which I imputed to her attention to domestic affairs, and sat down by her. I took hold of her hand, and was going to intrude on her lips for a kiss — But would you think it, Mr. TOWN! instead of suffering my salute, she reclined her head on the chair; drew her hand from mine; held it up as a bar between us; arose; and told me I must take no such liberties in future. I expostulated; and was for attempting again, imagining it was only a whim, (for you well know they all have their whims) but to my great misfortune found it was real. She resumed her place; and in a grave manner told me, I must think no more of what had passed between us; that she should always have a regard for me, but was determined not to marry; and therefore expected I should from that time forbear all further pretension. I earnestly (as you can make no doubt) pressed for reasons, but could get none except broken hints; such as — I would not have you marry — It may hurt your constitution, which seems to be very delicate — I cannot turn Nurse — We shall not answer each others expectations — and without any further or other ceremony, she quitted the room with all the haughty airs of a fine lady, who knows she has the man totally in her power.

OH Mr. TOWN! imagine what a confused situation I was in: I was thunder-struck: I was over-whelmed with horror and astonishment: I stood like the Soldier when he beheld the shocking condition of his General *Bellisarius*. After being a long time in that condition, I a little recovered my senses; and with much difficulty prevailed on her maid, to follow

follow her to her retreat ; and to beg the favour only to speak to her. That was denied me ; I was told her determination was fixed ; she expected I would obey it ; and that she should be absent when I came again.

I AM at present uncertain what to do : I shall therefore be obliged to you, if you will advise me, (as I can prove a promise of marriage) whether I shall put the affair into the hands of my attorney : or whether I shall stay till the warm weather comes (which I imagine will carry off my rheumatism) and attack her again : or whether I shall pocket the disappointment, and think no more of matrimony. Give me some consolation if you can : but if you have none, I desire, for the good of young batchelors like myself, you would advise them all between forty and fifty not to wear white stockings in winter.

I am, Sir, your constant reader, &c.

TIMOTHY DOUBT.

Mr. TOWN!

AS there are some vices, which the vulgar have presumed to copy from the great, so there are others, which the great have condescended to borrow from the vulgar. Among these I cannot but set down the black-guard practice (for so I must call it) of Cursing and Swearing : a practice, which (to say nothing at present of its profaneness) is low and indelicate, and places a man of quality on the same level with the chairman at his door. For my own part I cannot see the difference between a *By Gad* or a *Dem-me* minced and softened by a gentle pronunciation from well-bred lips, and the same expression bluntly bolted out from the broad mouth of a carman or an oyster-wench.

YOUR

YOUR predecessor the SPECTATOR has given us an account of a select party of Swearers, who were extremely surpris'd at their own common talk, which was taken down in shorthand, and afterwards repeated to them. In like manner, if we were to draw out a catalogue of fashionable Oaths and Curses in present use at *Arthur's* or any other polite assembly, would not the company themselves be led to imagine, that the conversation had been carried on between the lowest of the mob? Would they not blush to find, that they had gleaned their choicest phrases from streets and allies, and enriched their discourse by the elegant dialect of *Wapping*, or *Broad Saint Giles's*?

I SHALL purposely wave making any reflections on the impiety of this practice, as I am satisfied they would have but little weight either with the *beau-monde* or the *canaille*. The Swearer of either station devotes himself piece-meal (as it were) to destruction; pours out anathemas against his eyes, his heart, his soul, and every part of his body; and extends the same good wishes to the limbs and joints of his friends and acquaintance. This they both do with the same fearless unconcern; but with this difference only, that the Gentleman-Swearer damns himself and others with the greatest civility and good-breeding imaginable.

I KNOW it will be pleaded in excuse for this practice, that Oaths and Curses are intended only as mere expletives, to fill up and give a grace to conversation: but as there are still some old-fashioned creatures, who adhere to their common acceptation, it would be proper to substitute some other unmeaning terms in their room, and at the same time remote from the vulgar Cursing and Swearing. A worthy clergy-

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man (whose name I cannot recollect) being chaplain of a regiment, is said to have reclaimed the officers, who were much addicted to the vulgar idiom of swearing, by taking occasion to tell them a story, in which he introduced the words *bottle and glass*, instead of the usual expletives of *God, Devil, and damn*, which he did not think quite so becoming for one of *his cloth* to make free with. The same method might, I imagine, be followed by our people of fashion, whenever they are obliged to have recourse to the like substitutes for thought. *Bottle and glass* might be used with great energy in the table-talk at the *King's Arms* or *Saint Alban's* taverns: the gamester might be indulged in swearing by the *Knave of Clubs*, or the *Curse of Scotland*; or he might with some propriety retain the old execration of *the Deuce take it*: the beau should be allowed to "swear by his gracious self, "which is the god of his idolatry;" and the common expletives of conversation should consist only of *upon my word*, or *upon my honour*; which, whatever sense they might formerly bear, are at present understood only as words of course without meaning.

I am,

S I R,

Your humble Servant, &c.